

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY KABUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0244

INFO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

S E C R E T KABUL 7055

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR, MCAP, PINR, PK, AF

SUBJ: MILITARY BUILD-UP IN AFGHANISTAN

REF: ISLAMABAD 10317

1. EMBASSY HAS REVIEWED AIDE MEMOIRE PASSED TO ASSISTANT SECRETARY ATHERTON FOLLOWING SECRETARY'S MEETING WITH PRIMIN BHUTTO. FOLLOWING ARE EMBASSY COMMENTS ON AIDE MEMOIRE BASED ON MOST RECENT INFORMATION AVAILABLE TO US.

2. THE DELIVERY SCHEDULE OF EQUIPMENT FROM USSR OR PRECISELY WHAT THEY HAVE AGREED TO SUPPLY IS NOT KNOWN. SINCE 11 OCT 1973 LESS THAN 200 TANKS ARE KNOWN TO HAVE ARRIVED IN AFGHANISTAN (INCLUDES 32 T-34 TANKS, 120 T-54/55 TANKS, 35 T-62 TANKS, AND 6 M1967 BRIDGE LAYING TANKS). THERE HAVE BEEN NO REPORTS OF ARTILLERY PIECES, SAM-3 AND SAM-7 MISSILES, HELICOPTERS AND RADAR ARRIVING. TRANSPORT VEHICLES THAT HAVE ARRIVED PROBABLY NUMBER ABOUT 300 (KNOWN: 225 ZIL-130 TRUCKS AND 18 KRAZ-214 TRUCKS). OVER 100 ARMORED VEHICLES HAVE BEEN REPORTED TO HAVE ARRIVED (57 BTR-60 PB AMPHIBIOUS ARMORED PERSONNEL CARRIERS, 44 BTR-152 APC'S AND 14 BRDM-2 AMPHIBIOUS ARMORED RECONNAISSANCE VEHICLES). FOUR MIG-21 AIRCRAFT (2 TRAINERS AND 2 FIGHTERS TO REPLACE TWO DAMAGED OR DESTROYED AIRCRAFT), 36 MIG-17

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AIRCRAFT, AND - SU-7 AIRCRAFT (TO REPLACE ONE DESTROYED)

ARE KNOWN TO HAVE ARRIVED. IN ADDITION, A LARGE QUANTITY OF TANK AND ARTILLERY AMMUNITION, AIRCRAFT TIRES, MEDICAL SUPPLIES, AND SPARE PARTS FOR SOVIET-SUPPLIED EQUIPMENT WERE BROUGHT INTO THE COUNTRY DURING THE PAST YEAR.

THE 270 AFGHAN OFFICERS TO USSR AND 250 TO INDIA FOR TRAINING MENTIONED IN THE AIDE MEMOIRE MAY BE CORRECT. OUR DAO HAS REPORTED 115 AFGHAN ARMY OFFICERS AND 120 AFGHAN AIR FORCE OFFICERS DEPARTED FOR TRAINING IN USSR THIS PAST YEAR. FEW DETAILS AS TO THE NUMBER OF OFFICERS ATTENDING TRAINING IN INDIA ARE KNOWN HERE. OUR REPORTS HAVE INDICATED LESS THAN 100.

THE 97 T-34 TANKS OF THE 7TH ARMORED BRIGADE (KANDAHAR) HAVE BEEN REPLACED BY 5-55 TANKS PROVIDING THE BRIGADE A GREATER COMBAT POTENTIAL. THE T-34 TANKS WERE DIVIDED UP AMONG INFANTRY DIVISIONS THAT DID NOT POSSESS A TANK BATTALION PRIOR TO THIS TIME, AS FOLLOWS: ONE BATTALION (31 TANKS) EACH TO 12 AND 25 INF DIV (PAKTIA) AND 15 INF DIV (KANDAHAR). AN UNCONFIRMED REPORT INDICATES THAT THE 14TH INF DIV AT GHAZNI MAY BE GETTING A T-54 TANK BATTALION AND AN ARMORED INFANTRY BATTALION WITH BTR-152 APC'S. NO OTHER CHANGES IN THE ORDER OF BATTALIONS HAVE BEEN REPORTED. ELIOT

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